

REMARKS

Claims 1-30 were previously pending, of which claims 1, 6, and 16 were previously presented, and claims 2-5, 7-15, and 17-30 remain in their original form. Reconsideration of presently pending claims 1-30 is respectfully requested in light of the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

Noted with appreciation is the indication that claim 6 has been allowed. Also noted with appreciation is the indication that claims 4, 19, and 21 are directed at allowable subject matter, and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. However, claims 4, 19, and 21 depend from rejected claims but, for reasons set forth below, it is believed that the rejected claims are also allowable. Therefore, it is believed to be unnecessary to separately place claims 4, 19, and 21 in independent form at this time.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claim 1 recites:

A method of communicating semiconductor manufacturing information, the method comprising:
 providing, by a first service provider, a lot of semiconductor components to a second service provider for processing;
 receiving, by the first service provider, first information associated with the processing, from the second service provider;
 generating, by the first service provider, second information responsive to the first information; and
 outputting, by the first service provider, the second information to a customer affiliated with the second service provider.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Matsuda (US Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0143650 A1 hereinafter referred to as "Matsuda"). The PTO provides in MPEP §2131 that "[t]o anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim." Therefore, to sustain this rejection with respect to claim 1, Matsuda must contain all of the above claimed elements of the claim.

The Examiner alleges that all the steps of claim 1 are disclosed in Matsuda. Applicants respectfully disagree. More specifically, the Examiner alleges that the step of “providing, by a first service provider, a lot of semiconductor components to a second service provider for processing” is disclosed in paragraph [0021] of Matsuda. (See Office Action, pg. 2). The cited passage of Matsuda recites the following (Emphasis added and reference numbers omitted):

FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram showing the relationship between a semiconductor device manufacturer and a mask manufacturer. The semiconductor device manufacturer comprises a semiconductor device manufacturing line, an engineering department, and an ordering operation department. An order for a photomask required for manufacturing semiconductor devices in the semiconductor manufacturing line is placed with the mask manufacturer by the engineering department or the ordering operation department. The engineering department is responsible for developing new products, designing products complying with special specifications, and tracking down any problems that have arisen in the semiconductor manufacturing line. In association with these business operations, the engineering department places, with the mask manufacturer, an order for developing a mask (simply called a “development mask”), an order for a mask for special specifications (simply called a “special-specification mask”), and a request for inspecting a mask. The ordering operation department is responsible for routine work, such as replenishment of normal stock items, placing an order for standard production masks, and issuing a request for replacing a protective film (pellicle) of a mask with another film.

From the above, Matsuda discloses a semiconductor device manufacturer (e.g., first service provider) placing an order for photomask fabrication or a request for photomask inspection with a mask manufacturer (e.g., second service provider). Here, in the present application, the first service provider provides a lot of semiconductor components to a second service provider for processing. Accordingly, the semiconductor device manufacturer’s order and/or request, disclosed in Matsuda, are not equivalent to “providing, by a first service provider, a lot of semiconductor components to a second service provider for processing,” as is recited in claim 1.

As another example, the Examiner alleges that the step of “outputting, by the first service provider, second information determined in response to the first information, to a client affiliated with the second service provider” is disclosed in paragraph [0022] of Matsuda. (See Office

Action, pg. 3). Applicants respectfully disagree. The cited passage of Matsuda recites the following (Emphasis added and reference numbers omitted):

The mask manufacturer comprises an engineering department, a quality control department, a production control department, and a mask production line. The engineering department designs details of a mask. The quality control department inspects masks produced in the mask production line and masks which induced problems after having been delivered to a client. The production control department controls production of mass-produced products. Installed in the production line are various types of equipment; that is, a lithography system for drawing a pattern on a mask substrate; a process system for producing a pattern; a dimension inspection apparatus for verifying the dimensions of the formed pattern; optical measurement equipment for inspecting a photomask by means of actually radiating light on a photomask; and a visual inspection machine for verifying anomalies in the appearance of the photomask.

From the above, Matsuda describes the various departments of the mask manufacturer (e.g., second service provider). Nowhere in the cited passage does Matsuda disclose the step of “outputting, by the first service provider, second information determined in response to the first information, to a client affiliated with the second service provider,” as is recited in claim 1. There is no mention of the semiconductor device manufacturer (e.g., first service provider) outputting any information to a client affiliated with the mask manufacturer. In fact, the only time the cited passage mentions “a client” is to describe masks which induced problems only after they were delivered to “a client.”

Therefore, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 of claim 1 is not supported by the Matsuda reference, and should be withdrawn.

Now turning to independent claim 16. Claim 16 was rejected under the same rational as claim 1. Accordingly, claim 16 is allowable for at least the same reasons as set forth above for claim 1. Therefore, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 of claim 16 is not supported by the Matsuda reference, and should be withdrawn.

Dependent Claims

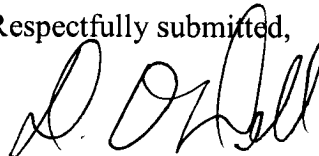
Dependent claims 2-5, 7-15, and 17-30 depend from, either directly or indirectly, and further limit independent claims 1 and 16 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as set forth above for claims 1 and 16.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the foregoing that independent claims 1, 6, and 16 are in condition for allowance. Dependent claims 2-5, 7-15, and 17-30 depend from, either directly or indirectly, and further limit independent claims 1 and 16 and, therefore, are allowable as well.

Favorable consideration and an early indication of the allowance of the claims are respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed number if a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

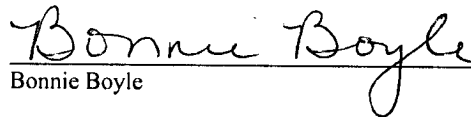


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